

INDIANAPOLIS NEWS
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The CIA and national security

To the Editor of The News:

Your Aug. 25 editorial, "The CIA and censorship" has just been called to my attention. It contains errors of fact, misses the main point and distorts an important issue.

Snepp's book does not charge that CIA "botched" the evacuation of Saigon. One cannot botch what one is not responsible for. Snepp was not prosecuted for writing the book or because the CIA didn't like it, but for not submitting it for security review as he had promised in writing to do. Snepp did not sign a contract with CIA "to submit anything he wrote," only to submit for security review what he writes about intelligence.

Nor did the Supreme Court affirm the "CIA's right to censor what any former employe says for the rest of his life." Such a sentence could not have been written by someone who had read what the Supreme Court had to say about the matter. John Marks is not a "former CIA agent," but a former Department of State employe.

You assert that the book "disclosed" no secrets. This is a false inference. We have never said that it disclosed no secrets. He was sued for breach of contract (his signed secrecy agreement). The purpose of the secrecy agreement is to protect the government's secrets. The method of assuring this is to have the agency's employes and ex-employes who write about intelligence submit their writings for security review before publication.

Our review procedures are subject to congressional oversight and judicial review. We do not delete criticisms of the agency, fair or unfair, true or false, but only that which is, and should remain, a secret of your government. We could have reviewed Snepp's book with very few deletions which would not have changed the sense of the book or its criticism of the CIA in any way.

One of my duties is to chair the Publications Review Board, that body which reviews submissions for security review. It should interest your readers to know that since that board was established in 1977, we have reviewed 294 manuscripts, of which only four have been disapproved. The regulation under which we operate states in part that "approval will not be denied solely

because the subject matter may be embarrassing to or critical of the agency."

Your opinion that CIA's exercise of this function has been "more arbitrary than effective," and your implication that CIA will not perform that function with fairness and discretion are gratuitous. The men and women of the Central Intelligence Agency — all of whom have voluntarily taken the same oath of secrecy and who live by it — deserve better of *The Indianapolis News*.

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